

"GOD AND COUNTRY"

SHORT ADDRESS

— OF —

REV. JESSE G. MACMURPHY

Delivered at Adams Memorial Hall

JULY 24, 1921, 3 P. M.



Mass Meeting of the
LESTER W. CHASE POST
AMERICAN LEGION

And Tribute to Body of
PRIVATE LESTER W. CHASE

Wounded May 10, 1918, at the Front

Died May 25, 1921

Body brought to Derry, N. H.

Resting in State

Reprinted in Book Form, Nov. 1924

THE OCCASION.

You are all familiar with the circumstances, that have lead to this Mass Meeting this afternoon, to do honor to the memory of a citizen of this town who answered the call of his country for military service, who went over to France, was wounded by shrapnel, May 10, 1918, and died from the wounds, May, 25, 1918. He was the first out of five hundred men in that service from Derry, who made the supreme sacrifice in the cause of humanity, the safety, freedom and welfare of his country. His body has been returned to his native town, and relatives, and friends, and lies in state in this public hall, as a fitting reminder of the price of liberty with eternal vigilance. For the perpetual care and preservation of precious memories connected with the military services of over four millions of men, who were American citizens, it has been considered wise and practicable to form the survivors of that terrible war into a grand brotherhood, and group them in convenient numbers for mutual help, mutual reminiscence, etc., and so Derry has a Post, consisting of all those returned soldiers who desire to associate

themselves in the admirable plan of binding together, in social and sympathetic union, all the returned soldiers of the American contingency in the latest great war.

And so may this be a rallying occasion, with enthusiasm to swell the American Legion .

For God and Country.

May we not say that every great movement, like the raising of a mighty army, even the sacrifice of the millions of human lives, and destruction of untold accumulations of industry, and the lamentations of other millions of sufferers, is a movement consciously undertaken as a sacred obligation to humanity, and instrument of supernatural appointment, the working out of a great and divine purpose beyond our comprehension, and may we not say there is no great government, like this, which is not for God, and at the same time for our Country, and in a superior sense the loss of lives and distresses of nations, and searchings of hearts and consciences for ways and means of living together in harmony. Must we not say the needs of the world are included in this great movement, and that in seeking for business relations with

all the world, and binding up the wounds of the bleeding, we serve God and country.

"Seeing we are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, (Hebrews 12. 1 and 2). The quick and the dead bear witness, and we can think of time, and of space, and of spirit, so indeterminate except in their relativities, so far and yet so near, so vague and yet so real, so linked up with the problems of our future. Shall we not accept the only explanation of man's destiny, that is possible, and decide to live by the teachings of that Divine Master who for humanity gave himself as a sacrifice accepted of God as a sweet smelling savour

Dulce et decorum.

Perhaps originating in just such experiences of wars, and sufferings and distresses, as the warring nations have seen, in and after the late terrible conflict, the Ancient Romans devised a remarkable sentiment of consolation, "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*" It is sweet and glorious to die for one's country. A sentiment so unselfish, and so noble, has inspired men in all ages to give themselves unreservedly to great movements, to accept and adopt the supreme test of character, entire renunciation of self.

The element of sweetness in the self renunciation of a brave man, the sweet smelling savour of sacrifice, is almost as old as the writing of the prophets, or the history of the race; it reminds one of the perfume, or persistent fragrance, of the bruised mint crushed under our feet; as we find it in some pathway in nature's pasture lands. Scarcely would its tender stem and flower be noticed, till suddenly we are made aware of the fact, that we have trodden upon a creation of beauty, medicinal value, and delightful fragrance. What is sweeter than the fragrance of new mown meadow grass? Too frequently the essential virtues, and ingenuous characteristics of men are overlooked and never brought to light unless brought to our attention under distressing circumstances, as in the onward rush of competing, struggling peoples, fighting to fulfill their destinies. Is it not true that whether living or dying, we equally perform a true service for God and Country.

What is Your Life?

There are but two great principles that can be of permanent value to you and me, to soldier or civilian, religion and patriotism. One may enlarge upon these themes indefinitely. We are impressed with the reality of God's universe and the limitless extent of His creation, immeasurably beyond our reach unsearchably beyond the penetration of the greatest telescopes in the world. We are impressed with the theory of a perfect state, a universal government a realization of the reign of righteousness. Each day that we live we may discover a sign, small though it be, that the great unalterable movement of the age is onward toward the ideal trust in an Almighty Father and a sweet and blessed Country.

"O, sweet and blessed country,

The home of God's elect!

O, sweet and blessed country,

That eager hearts expect!

Jesus, in mercy bring us

To that dear land of rest:

Who art with God the Father,

And spirit, ever blest"

For the triumphant fulfilment of that patriotic song and prayer, more glorious than the National Anthem so joyfully sung

to America; we may add a doxology, that should worthily compete with the words that belong to Old Hundred.

"Come, Thou Almighty King,

Help us Thy Name to sing,

Help us to praise!

Father all glorious,

O'er all victorious,

Come and reign over us,

Ancient of days!"



